

Unimas takes lead in R&D on jatrophha

Collaboration involves researchers, masters students, says Faculty dean

By Rintos Mail

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) has begun its research and development (R&D) project on the jatrophha curcas in Sarawak.

The university's Faculty of Resource Science and Technology dean, Professor Wan Sulaiman Wan Harun, said Unimas was collaborating with Sarawak-based company Alam Widuri Biotek Sdn Bhd (Alam Widuri) for a proper research on the plant.

Wan Sulaiman, who led a Unimas delegation that comprised researchers and the final year masters students to

visit Alam Widuri's farm in Lundu on Wednesday, said his researchers would begin research in their respective fields immediately.

"We have identified the various areas of our research project, and we are working with Alam Widuri because they have the seeds, the nurseries, farms and even the mother plants in Sarawak," he said in Lundu Wednesday.

He said Unimas and Alam Widuri had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sometime last year, but unforeseen circumstances caused 'a slight delay' in the project taking off.

"We are serious with the project. After this visit, we will proceed

immediately, since we have identified the areas for our researches.

"Apart from that, we are also preparing the research proposal for our final year masters students on jatrophha studies," he said.

Wan Sulaiman said 21 researchers would be involved in the research project and these researchers would be divided into three groups who will be working in different areas of the studies.

According to him, one group will carry out studies on the genetic, biotechnology and planting material improvement; another group on the jatrophha by-product utilisation; while the third group will research on seed management

and crop production and development.

Alam Widuri chief executive officer Johnny Lee and the company would give its fullest cooperation to the researchers and welcome any other interested parties wanting to study the plant for its commercial viability.

He said the company had nurseries and plants in Lundu, Serian, Samarahan, Sri Aman, Miri and Tatau for the research group from Unimas to carry out their project.

Lee said the company had also given out 6,000 jatrophha seeds to Unimas mainly for its final year masters undergraduates to complete their studies on jatrophha.